

A  
SERMON

Preached before the  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE  
LORD MAYOR,  
AND  
Court of Aldermen,  
AT THE  
GUILD-HALL CHAPPEL,  
The 16<sup>th</sup> of December, 1683.

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By JOHN SCOTT Rector of St. Peters Poor, London.

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L O N D O N,

Printed by *Ralph Holt*, for *Robert Horn* at the South Entrance of the *Royal Exchange*, and *Walter Kettilby* at the *Bishop's Head* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1684.

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AND

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AT THE

COMMONS CHURCH

The 16th of December, 1682.

By JOHN SEFT, Rector of St. Paul's Church, London.

LONDON

Printed by W. B. for the Author, at the Sign of the Anchor, in the Strand, near the Church of St. Paul.

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TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
St Henry Tulce,  
LORD MAYOR  
OF THE  
CITY  
OF  
LONDON.

My LORD,

**I**N Obedience to your Commands, I present this mean  
Performance to your Lordships perusal, which out  
of the known Candor and Goodness of your Nature,

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you

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

you were pleased not only to pardon, but accept; and 'tis no wonder that a Discourse of this Nature, how defective soever in the Composure, should find Acceptance from such a Loyal Audience, as My Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen, who had the Courage to be Loyal, when Loyalty was grown almost out of fashion, and to stemm the overflowing Tide of a Popular Faction in the height of all its Fury and Violence. I profess to your Lordship; with the same Sincerity, that I would confess my Soul to God, that my Design in this Discourse, was only to promote the Peace and Happiness of Men; for I thank God, know no man in the World, whom I do not heartily wish well to, and whom how widely soever he may dissent from me in Matters of Religion I would not most willingly render any good Office I am able, so far as it consists with my Duty to the Church and Government; and had I not thought it an exceeding good Office to all, and particularly to the Dissenters and their Adherents (whose Discontents render them of all men most obnoxious to factious impressions) to warn them in such a Time and Juncture of Affairs



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

As this of the manifold Mischiefs of Faction, I had not troubled your Lordship, or the World with a Discourse of this Nature. As for the Style of it, if it be in some Places a little smart and severe, it's wholly Owing to the Matter it treats of, which cannot be naturally exprest without Severity, and when men will do such things as cannot be represented in their own natural Colours, without reproaching and upbraiding them, they must blame themselves, and not the Expression; and yet all that looks severe in this Discourse, aims only at the Patrons and Agitators of Faction, whose Business it is, to seduce the Simple and well-meaning from their Duty and Safety; and in such a case the keenest Satyr is Charity; for how can it but move a Charitable Mind to see so many Innocent Souls led by the Nose into Ruin by a Company of pretending Demagogues, who have no other Design in it, but to gratifie their own Revenge and Ambition, and if I should have been a little passionate in giving them warning of their danger, sure no wise man would be offended.

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

sended at me for endeavouring to pluck him out of the fire, though it be by the hair of the head; but if instead of taking this Charitable Warning, those whom it concerns should be so disingenuous as to inveigh against it, I fear their own woful Experience of those mischievous Effects of Faction here discours'd of, will force them one day to repent of it, and God grant it be not too late; all that I shall farther add, is my hearty Prayers that God may prosper your Lordships Faithful Endeavour for the Peace and Happiness of this Renowned City, and render your Government a Blessing to all that are under its Influence. I remain,

My LORD,

Your Lordships most faithful

and obedient Servant,

JOHN SCOTT.

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S E R M O N

Preached before the

Lord Mayor, &c.

Decem. 16. 1683.

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P R O V E R B S. 24. 21.

*And meddle not with those that are given to Change.*

I Shall not trouble you with the various Acceptions of the Hebrew Word *Schonim*, which the Chaldee render *Fools*, or, as we say, *Changelings*; and which our Translators more suitably to what goes before, render, *those that are given to Change*: for in the former part of the Text, he advises his Son to *fear the Lord, and Honour the King*; that is, to reverence and obey the Supreme Lord and Governour of the World, and

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in

in reverence to him, to be Dutiful and Obedient to the King, who is his immediate Vicegerent, and Representative upon Earth, and upon that account ought to be Honoured and Obeyed: And therefore my Son (say's he) as thou wouldst be secur'd, from all Disloyalty and Disobedience to thy King, in contemning whose Authority thou openly affrontest the Supreme Lord of the World, whose invifible Majesty he personates; *meddle not with those that are given to Change, i. e.* who either out of a swelling Ambition of being uppermost, or a private Revenge againſt their Superiours, or a reſtleſſ peeviſhneſs and impatience of Rule, or affectation of Novelty, or deſign to repair their broken Fortunes out of the publick ruins, are for introducing Changes, and Alterations in the Government: with ſuch as theſe do not mingle thy ſelf, no not ſo much as to liſten to their Inſinuations, or to credit or propagate their Reports; or to ſupport and countenance their Cauſe, either with thy Tongue, or Pen, or Money, or Suffrage, or to be any other way aiding or aſſiſting to their factious and ſeditious Deſigns. In the Proſecution of this Argument I ſhall endeavour, Firſt, to repreſent to you the great folly, and danger of ingaging with ſuch as are given to Change, that is, with Parties, and Factions againſt the Government. And 2ly, To give you the proper Marks and Characters of ſuch Parties, and Factions, by which all well-minded Men  
may

may know them, and avoid intermeddling with them.

*First*, I shall endeavour to represent the great folly, and danger of engaging with Factions against the Government, of which I shall give you these five Instances.

*First*, It exposes our Understanding to the most Erroneous Prejudices and Misrepresentations of things.

*Secondly*, It exposes our Will to the blackest and most Diabolical Affections.

*Thirdly*, It tempts us to an high neglect of, and Indifferency in the greatest and most necessary things of Religion.

*Fourthly*, It involves us in the most indirect Courses, and then trains us on, from bad to worse.

*Fifthly*, It ordinarily snares and entangles us in the greatest temporal Mischiefs and Calamities.

*First*, Our ingaging with Factions against the Government, exposes our Understanding to the most erroneous Prejudice; for it is the constant Method of all Factions, to prejudice the Minds of the People, with false and spiteful glosses upon the Actions of their Superiors, with

scandalous Forgeries, or foul misconstructions of their fairest meanings, and most honourable Designs; without which base Arts, it would be impossible for them to dis-affect the Vulgar to any tolerable Government, or to Alarm their Passions, and Fears, and Jealousies, which are the usual Train by which they give fire to all publick Disorder and Confusion. When therefore a Man ingages in a Faction, he doth in effect prostitute his Understanding, to all the Cheats and Delusions, that busie and contriving Knaves can impose on it; for having once Wedded his Affections to the Interest of the Faction, they will quickly bribe his Understanding into a belief of every thing that favours it; and let the opinion or the story be never so improbable, it will find an easy Access to such minds, as are already feed by their Affections to entertain it; and provided it be but serviceable to the Party he is ingaged in, that will prevail with his Understanding, against a thousand good Reasons to the contrary; let him but hear his Prince reproacht, with never such wild and improbable stories, he shakes his head and swallows all for Gospel. Tell him that the King is deeply ingaged in a Plot against his own Life, and Crown and Dignity; Alas what a dismal Story is this, that a Man should thus fall out with himself, and doat upon his own ruin! But though his Faith thus glibly swallows Camels on one side, yet 'tis strange to see how it will strain at



a Gnat on t'other: for tell him on t'other side, with never so much Evidence and Demonstration, that the Traiterous design he talks of is hatching under the Wings of his own Faction; and though you shew him the very Association, and Band of the Bloody Conspiracy; upon the Principles whereof they have Murdered one King already, and so may reasonably be presumed to be acting the Tragedy of another, especially when they act the same things over again, Scene after Scene, so exactly in the same Garb, and Plot, and Language, that had one who dyed 40 years ago, arose from his Grave, but 2 or 3 years since, he would doubtless have concluded, that 42 was not yet expired; yea though you produce a fresh Conspiracy, proved upon the Party by undeniable Evidence, and even by the free Confessions of the dying Conspirators themselves, yet 'tis next to impossible to perswade him, that ever such wise Men should be so mad, or such good Men so Wicked, as to ingage in such a desperate Villainy. But I need not tell you, who have seen the Transactions of these last six years, how many fulsome Lies have been confidently believed, and notorious Truths dasht out of Countenance, through blind Partiality to a Faction. And indeed when once a Man is ingaged in a Faction, 'tis thenceforth impossible for him to judge impartially of things, because now his Faith must see through his Affections, and his Affections must

must follow the interest of his Party, and if that be engaged in ill designs, it will need ill Principles to countenance it; and his Affections being pre-engaged to the Interest of the Faction, will easily bribe his Understanding, to assent to any Principles that are needful to support it. Wherefore if you have any reverence for your own Understandings, if you would not be play'd upon by Impostors, and Deceivers, and choust and abused, and lead by the Nose through all the wild Mazes of folly and falsehood, *meddle not with those that are given to change.*

*Secondly,* By engaging our selves in Factions against the Government, we shall in all probability, insensibly contract the most black and Diabolical Affections; for this is the Natural Process of all Faction, it begins in Pride and Self-conceit, in an arrogant Presumption that we are much wiser than those above us, and fitter to Rule and Govern; and then having once entertained this overweening Opinion of our selves, we look upon all that are superior to us, with Envious and Malignant Eyes, and think our selves highly injured and affronted, that we are not plac'd at the upper end of the World; and then from Envy we proceed to hating our Governours, and from hating them to Impatience of their Government; to ease our selves of which we soon imbody into Factions, where we whet our Malice

Malice and Arrogance upon one another, by applauding each other in censuring those above, in running spiteful Descants on their Actions, and Arraigning their Male-Administrations at the Tribunal of our Majesty; than which there is nothing can more effectually humour and gratifie our Vanity: For what a Glorious thing is it for a little Shop-keeper or Mechanick to perk up a mighty Politician, and sit in Judgement on his Governours, to expose the Folly of their Conduct, and find out the soft places of their Ministers of State: how much greater and more Magnificent is this, than to be Dull and stay at home and mind ones own Business? And when by thus humouring our Pride we have blown it up into Insolence, this swells our Envy, and that inflames our Malice against all that are above us, or opposite to us; for by this time our mind is so bloated that we cannot bear the least Contradiction, but are ready to run down with Clamour, and hard Names, every thing that thwarts our imperious Dictates; and in matters of Religion every thing is Popery that agrees not with the Model of our Reformation, and in matters of State every thing Tyranny that opposes the Platform of our Government; and unless all things be framed according to our Humour, and bend to the Dictates of our Oraculous Pride, Heaven and Earth will come together, the Gospel, and Liberty and  
Property

Property will vanish, and the whole Frame of things sink into Confusion. And while we thus make our Pride and Self-conceit the Standard of the World, and expect that all things should comply with and truckle to it: We shall be so impatient of Contradiction, that 'twill be little better than Treason, or Blasphemy to oppose us; so that whosoever presumes to give Check to our Insolence, is sure to be made the mark of our Malice, and to be persecuted with all the Reproach and *Opprobrium* that the most inveterate Rancour can invent. Thus Faction, you see, is impregnated with the very Nature of the Devil, and carries in it all the Pride and Envy, Rancour and Malice that sunk down the Angels of Light from Heaven, and converted them into Fiends and Furies. Wherefore as you would not expose your Natures to Spoil and Ravage, to be over-spread with the most Poisonous Affections, and drown'd in the Passions of Hell, *Meddle not with those that are given to Change.*

*Thirdly,* By ingaging our selves in Factions against the Government, we shall be mightily tempted to neglect the great and necessary things of Religion; for generally the Foundations of all Factions against Government are laid in little Disputes about matters of Religion, which are usually started by the Leaders of the Faction, for no other end but to ingage the honest

honest Zeal of the People against the establish'd Religion, that thereby they may ingage them against the establish'd Government. And could they but make them as Zealous for the Mass as for the Directory, 'twould be all one to them, which of the two they advance against the publick Establishment; their Design in these hot Disputes about Religion, being only to lay a Train to blow up the Government; and since the Zeal of the People is the Tool they must Work with, it is their Interest to sharpen it, and render it as Keen and Active as may be; so that when once you have ingaged your selves in their Faction, to be sure they will employ their utmost Indeavours to bigot your Minds to their Opinion, and to ingage all your Zeal for the little Modes and Circumstances they Contend for; they will so represent the Matter to you, as if the Life and Substance of Religion were in Dispute; as if God, and Jesus Christ, and the Gospel were all at stake upon the Controversie, and your Souls were to sink or swim with their Opinions; and your Zeal being ingaged by these Arts, for the trifling Opinions of your Party, you will by degrees grow remiss and neglective of the great and weighty Things of Religion: For the mind of Man being finite in all its Acts, can never operate divers ways at once, with equal Force and Vigour; but whatsoever Time and Attention



we bestow upon one thing, we must necessarily subtract from another; and so by degrees as we grow more and more Zealous for the little Modes and Opinions of our Party, we shall grow more and more remiss in the main and necessary Duties of Religion, till at last we degenerate into perfect lukewarmness. And accordingly how many are there among our selves, the very Spirit of whose Religion is evaporated into a noisie busie and blustering Zeal for Parties, who are wondrous Nice and Scrupulous about the Rites and Ceremonies of Religion; and yet can swallow Lies and Perjuries, Treasons and Rebellions without the least Straining or Remorse? O did but these men love God and their Neighbours in the same Proportion, as they do a Conventicle! Did they but hate Impiety and Immorality, but half as much as they do Bishops and Liturgies, what excellent Christians would they be? But Alas, their Zeal is swallowed up in their Faction; the Current of it is diverted out of those proper Channels of Piety and Vertue, into the little wranglings of their Party, where it flows Headlong, and makes a Clamorous noisie, to no other purpose but to disturb the World: Wherefore as you would not be Tempted into a gross neglect of the Substantials of Religion, to convert your Piety and Vertue, into Bigottry and stickling for Parties, *Meddle not with those that are given to Change.*

*Fourthly,*



*Fourthly*, By engaging our selves in Factions against the Government, we shall in all Probability insensibly involve our selves in indirect Courses, and be train'd on from one Evil to another, into the most Flagitious Villanies. When first men list themselves into Parties, their Designs perhaps are fair and innocent: They are told that their Religion, their Liberties, and Properties are in danger; and finding such a Party of men set up for forward and zealous Assertors of them, they mingle with them with no other intent but to concur with them, in all honest and lawful Endeavours, to preserve and secure those invaluable Blessings. But Alas poor Souls! they see where they begin, but God knows where they will end; for now they must move by the measures of the Faction, and see with its Eyes, and hear with its Ears, through which to be sure all the Actions and Designs of their Governours, will be represented to them in the blackest Colours; by which their Passions being inflamed with contempt and hatred of them, will soon blaze out at their Mouths, or Pens into seditious Talk or Factious Libels; and then such is the nature of contempt and hatred, that the very venting of them fans and irritates them, till at last they settle into inveterate rancour, and then they are capable of any mischief; for all along as their passion is growing, they mistake it for a pious zeal for God and Religion, and the publick

good, and under that Notion cherish its irregular transports, concluding that nothing can be amiss, that proceeds from such a sanctified Principle; and so though they lie, and slander, and backbite, and perjure themselves over and over, yet 'tis all well, because they do it out of Zeal for the Glory of God, and the true Protestant Religion. For when once intemperate zeal gets ahead, it bears down all considerations of Reason and Religion before it, and hurries us on into the foulest Enormities; and then when once our outrageous Zeal hath transported us into illegal and unjustifiable Actions, we shall many times be tempted to proceed, through mere despair of a safe retreat, and to shelter our selves from the Punishment of one Crime, by committing another: For so in all Factions Men, do commonly so involve themselves, that when they have done ill, they have no other way to save themselves, but by doing worse: Thus when by their Seditious Behaviour, they have incensed their Governour against them, its necessary for them to Associate; and when they are Associated, its necessary to Rebel; and when they have drawn the Sword, its necessary to fling the Scabbard to the Devil: for I make no doubt, but many of those Wretches that Murdered the late King, would have trembled at the thought of it, when they first engaged in the Faction; but their zeal having once transported them into Sedition, they had no other way to  
escape

escape but by Rebellion; and being engaged in Rebellion, they had no other Sanctuary but Regicide. As therefore you would not expose your Innocence and Vertue to these and such like dangerous Temptations, *minge not with such as are given to Change.*

*Fifthly*, and Lastly, By ingaging with Factions against the Government, we shall in all probability, intangle our selves in the greatest Temporal Mischiefs and Calamities: For Faction is naturally forward and Pragmatical, it fills Mens heads with Projects and Chymera's, with Mysteries of State and Models of Government, and sends their thoughts after the Fools eyes, roving to the ends of the Earth, to Parliaments and Privy Councils, and high Consultations about Affairs of Government. And when once their Minds are got abroad, their Bodies cannot stay long behind, but away they must to some Coffee-House, or Publick Refectory, to vent their Politicks, and advise about Affairs of State, discharge their Consciences to the Publick, by directing how things ought to be managed, and shewing where the Ministers of State are out, and by what Measure, they ought to steer the Helm of Government; and in the mean time while they are Governing abroad, the Shop is neglected at Home, and the Trade decays, and they and their Families sink insensibly into Beggery; for

though for a very small charge they may sit and govern an hour or two together, yet hereby their time is not only wasted, which is much more precious then their Money, but their heads are filled with so many Politick Whimsies, that when they come home they cannot mind their business, their Shops are grown too little for their Minds, and they can neither think nor talk beneath Affairs of Empire: And when once Men are got into this vein, 'tis time for their Creditors as well as their Governours to look after them; for 'tis too too much for one Man to Govern a Kingdom, and to mind a Trade; while he is busie abroad, he must be Idle at home, and when his Faction hath reduced him to Idleness, his Idleness will soon bring him to Beggery; of the truth of which the Age we live in affords us too many wofull Instances, of such as have been thrust on by a Factious and Pragmatical Temper, to inter-meddle with Affairs of Government; which by degrees have so ingroßt their Thoughts and Cares, and Time and Activity, that they could scarce ever be at leisure to attend their own Business; and so like the foolish Astronomer, whilst they have been Gazing at the Stars, and troubling their Heads about Affairs above them, they have been utterly Regardless of their own Concerns, and tumbled into the Ditch of Ruin unawares. But suppose they escape this Rock, yet there is another very dangerous

dangerous one attends them; and that is, the Law, against which in all Probability they will one time or other split themselves in Pieces: For Faction naturally renders men Bold and Confident of their own understanding, so that if they have but attain'd some little smattering of Law, they make no doubt but that they fully understand it, and the utmost bounds of it, and how far they may venture without incurring its Penalties; and so many times they Dance themselves into a Noose, and like silly Flies play about the Candle till they have singed their Wings in the Flame of it. For when out of an ignorant Confidence men will venture as far as they imagine they may, 'tis a thousand to one but they venture farther than they should, and either prate or scribble within the reach of the Penalty, or through their own inconsiderate Rashness, are insensibly decoy'd into Seditious and Treasonous Conspiracies. Where notwithstanding all Engagements of Secrecy, and Hopes of future Advancement, their Lives and Fortunes are at Pawn in the hands of their fellow Conspirators; who being prompted, either by Drunkenness or Vanity, or Fear, or Conscience, will in all Probability one time or other betray them; or if they do not, yet their Cabals may be observed and suspected; their Councils may be over-heard, or their own Guilty Looks, or Affectation of Secrecy, may discover them, and a thousand other  
Accidents



Accidents may unfold their dark Intrigues, and conclude their mighty Hopes in a Halter. And considering that there is an All-seeing Providence that super-intends the Affairs of the World, and hath a peculiar Regard to the Safety of Princes, it is ten thousand to one against them, but that one time or other, they are catcht in their own Snares ; for so it follows immediately after my Text, *For their Calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knows the Ruin of them both ?* That is, both of those that move the Rebellion, and of those that Associate with them.

I now proceed to the second thing propos'd ; which is, to give you some Signs and Tokens, by which you may distinguish *such as are given to Change*, in Order to your avoiding them.

One would think indeed, considering our Circumstances, it should be needless to warn us of ingaging in Factions against our Government ; which is not only in it self the most gentle and easie in the World, but also Administr'd with anunparallel'd Lenity and Goodness, by a most Gracious and Merciful Prince, a Prince that hath been indear'd to us by the most signal Favours of Heaven, by so many Wonders of Providence, and strange repeated Deliverances, and under whose Gracious Influence and Protection we have hitherto sat quietly



quietly under our own Vines, whilst all the Nations round about, have been involved in Blood and Confusion : so that for us to lift our selves in a Faction against him, who hath been the Author of so much Happiness to us, and this after so many Repulses of Divine Providence, which hath so manifestly stood by him, and own'd him for its Darling and Favourite ; would be to fight, not only against our selves, and our own Happiness ; not only against God's express Will, and visible Authority, but against his bare and naked Arm too. Notwithstanding all which it's too too visible, how apt we are to be impress'd and wrought upon, by the Seditious Arts and Insinuations of Evil-minded men : Wherefore in such an Age as this, wherein even Well-meaning men are so often practis'd on, and their honest Zeal is so apt to be abus'd, and ridden by a Company of designing Male-Contents, it must doubtless be very seasonable to give some Signs and Tokens to the World, by which those that are given to Change may be known, and discovered, and avoided. Of these, therefore, I shall give you the following Particulars.

*First*, When men, who have Actually changed the Government already, begin to re-advance their old Principles, Methods and Pretences, it's a certain Sign they are given to Change ; for either they have repented their Subversion of the Government, or they have not ; if they

have, the Fruits of it will appear in their future Behaviour, they will be the more Peaceable, and Modest, and Obedient for the time to come, and keep at a greater distance from those Seditious Arts, by which they were inveigled, or did inveigle others, into the past Rebellion. But if they have not repented, and do still continue of the same mind, advancing their old Principles and Pretences, you may be sure they are aiming at their old Mark, and 'twould not be Charity but Sottishness, to believe the Gamester who Rookt ye once before, doth not design the same again, when you see him throw the same false Dice. When therefore you hear the Cry of Popery, and Arbitrary Government renewed, by a Party that have once blown up the Throne with it already, you may conclude upon it, that they are Playing the Old Game over again. For whatsoever Cause there may be, to dread either Popery or Tyranny; these of all Men, were they truly Penitent for what is past, would be the most cautious how they Alarmed mens Fears and Jealousies again, considering what horrid Mischiefs they did by their false Alarms heretofore: When therefore you see them forward and industrious, and raise to propagate their old Clamour afresh, you may without breach of Charity conclude, that they are the same Men they were, and are driving at the same Design.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, When men make that a Pretence for publick Clamour and Bustle which themselves have little or no Claim to, or Regard for, it's a certain sign they are given to Change; for tis not to be imagin'd that men should be heartily concern'd for those things wherein they have no share or interest: Should you hear two Persons earnestly contending about the Division of the Lands in the World in the Moon, you would hardly believe they were in Earnest, because whether there be Lands there or no, you are sure these men can have no Interest in them; and therefore you must either conclude that they are Mad, or that whatever they pretend, the Foundation of their Quarrel lyes below the Moon. Thus for Instance, When you hear a Company of profligate Debochees, that live in open Defiance to all Religion, raise a Clamour for Religion, in which they are no more interested or concern'd than in those up-land Countries, in the World of the Moon; you may be sure the real Cause of their Clamour is something, in which they are more nearly Concern'd, and that this Pretence of Religion is only a plausible Mask to their Covetousness, or Revenge, or Ambition: And so again, when you hear a Company of Bankrupts or Stript-Sequestrators, raise a Cry for Freehold and Property, against the Government, you may depend upon it, that this is not the real Mark they

aim at; for what should make these men so Zealous for Property, that have nothing of their own to lose? it's a plain Case therefore that they Love your Properties so well, that they would fain have a share in them; and in Order thereunto they would raise a Storm upon the Government, that so in a Common Rack they may enrich themselves with the Division of the Spoil, and wrest their Old Usurpations out of the hand of the rightful Possessors. Wherefore while you Live, have a Care of inter-mingling your selves with *Atheists* and *Beggars* in their Contentions with the Government for Religion and Property.

*Thirdly*, When men pretend Religion or publick Reformation, but pursue it by sinful and indirect Means, it's a certain Token that they are given to Change; for they who heartily espouse the Interest of Religion, are Enemies to all things that Religion is an Enemy to. And therefore if I hate the Corruptions of Religion, for Religions sake I must hate all sinful ways of Reforming it, because those Sinful ways are as contrary to Religion as the Corruptions I would reform by them. As for Example; Religion is as great an Enemy to Lying and Rebellion, as it is to Popery; and therefore if I truly love Religion, I shall be as great an Enemy to the one as the other: Wherefore if I see men Attempt to reform  
Religion

Religion from Popery, by Lying or Rebellion; I am sure 'tis not to serve Religion that they do it, but to serve themselves by unhinging the Government: For had they the sincere Zeal to Religion they pretend to, they would be as forward to obey its Commands of speaking the Truth, and submitting to their Governours, as they are to comply with its Prohibitions of Worshipping Images, and Consecrated Waters, because its Authority is equally concern'd in both: And besides, they would Consider, that by using unwarrantable Means to purge or defend it, they shall much more prejudice its Cause, than the best Reformation can promote it. And Consequently, that it is much more for the true Interest of Religion, to be Persecuted by Popery, than to be reformed by Rebellion: whereas by using wicked Arts to defend it, they only rescue it from one Enemy to betray it to another; and to Vindicate its Honour from Superstition and Idolatry, sacrifice it to Rebellion and Murder. When therefore you find any Party of men driving on a Pretence of Religion or Reformation, with Lies and Perjuries, Backbiting and Slanders, Tumults and Insurrections: As you tender, either your Vertue, or Welfare, have nothing to do with them; for you will most certainly find a Faction of Hypocrites, that only make a shew of Reforming Religion to undermine the Government.

*Fourthly,*



*Fourthly*, When under a Pretence of Reforming the Government, men reproach and vilifie the Persons of their Governours, and are forward to believe Ill, and backward to believe Well of them, it's a certain sign that they are given to Change; for if they design no more than the Reformation of some Faults, or Errors in the Government, they would only apply themselves to those in whose Power it is to correct them, and with all Humility endeavour to convince them of, and perswade them to rectifie them: But to make it our business to speak ill of them where they cannot hear us, and proclaim and magnifie their Faults in our common Conversation, what other end can this serve, but, First, to Arm the Passions, and then the Hands of their People against them: To what purpose should you tell me a Tragical Story, of the ill Actions or Designs of my Prince? You know very well, I am neither his Tutor, nor his Counsellor, and so no way capable to Correct, or Reform him. All that you can effect, therefore, is to raise an ill Opinion of him in my mind, and what other Influence can my ill Opinion have, but to prepare me to list my self in any Mischievous Design against him: When therefore you find men addicted to Whisper, or Proclaim the Faults of their Governours, to Magnifie their Faults, and Conceal or lessen their good Conduct and Success, you may depend upon it, that their Designs are Mischievous,



chievous, that they rejoyce in the Faults they exclaim against, and are glad things are so bad, and do heartily wish they were worse, that so they might exclaim against them with the better Grace and Countenance; that they lament nothing so much, as the wise and good Deeds of their Governours, and that the worst News they can hear, is the Prosperity of the Publick, under the happy Influence of their Government: For how can I delight to imblazon the Faults I am sorry for, and do wish were amended? How can I take Pleasure in making them worse than they are, did I not wish they were so? Why should I be so forward to believe any ill of them, but that *Facile credimus quod volumus*? Why so backwards to believe any Good, but that we heartily wish there were no Cause for it? Wherever, therefore, you find any Persons of this Character, avoid them as you would the Air of a Pest-House; for assure your selves whatever they pretend, 'tis not the Reformation of the Government they aim at, but the Destruction of the Governours.

*Fifthly*, When Men shift their Principles with their Interest, and to serve a Turn can comply at one time, with that which they condemn at another, it's a sure sign they are given to Change; for if Conscience be the motive of our non-compliance with the Government,

ment, those reasons which sway us, when it is for our Interest, will as well sway us when it is against it; because our Conscience is nothing but the reason of our Mind directing us what to do, and what to avoid; and though outward Changes may alter our Interest, yet 'tis only better reason that can alter our Reason, and whether it be better or no, is not to be determined by our mutable Interests, but by Scripture, or the immutable Natures of things. When therefore you see any Party of Men, that dissent from the Government, shift their Principles and Practices, according to their variable Exigencies of their Affairs, Conform to day, and Non-conform to morrow, go to Church and receive the Sacrament to avoid a Penalty, or qualify themselves for an Office, and when that Turn is served revolt to a Conventicle, and pretend Conscience against our Worship and Ceremonies: When you hear them curse Toleration whilst themselves are in the Saddle, and as soon as they are dismounted declaim for Liberty of Conscience, cry up the Prerogatives of the Crown while it indulges, and cry them down again, as soon as it restrains them; in a Word, when you hear them bitterly exclaiming against Equivocation, Rebellion, and Treason in a Papist, and yet practise it themselves upon Popish Principles when their own Cause and Interest invites them; when, I say, you see these, or any such like Shiftings and Doublings

lings in any Party dissenting from the Government; you may certainly conclude that 'tis not their Conscience sways, but their Faction.

*Sixthly* and *Lastly*, When men who in the ordinary Course of their Conversation, are proud and quarrelsome, and impatient of Contradiction, set up Pretences of Religion against the Government, 'tis a certain sign that they are given to *Change*: for a great part of that which men call Religion, is nothing but the Workings of their natural Temper into such Principles and Practices as are most suitable to it. Thus the Pharisees, for instance, were Men of a very haughty, sower, Pragmatical, and untractable Nature, and this Temper of theirs wrought it self by degrees into a suitable Religion; for so their Pride issued into Affectation of Singularity, and that into those distinguishing Garbs, and Rites, and Gestures, which were the Badges of their Faction; so their Austerity and Sowerness discharged it self in long Prayers, frequent Fasts, and unnecessary Severities, and that into an uncharitable Opinion of every one that prayed not as long, and fasted not as often as they; and this into a sullen Separation from their Neighbours both in Civil and Sacred Society; and in a word, so their furliness and untractable Humour, wrought out into a factious scrupulosity about Matters of Civil Obedience, and that

into Seditions, and sometimes open Rebellions, upon slight and trifling Occasions; and when upon such Principles as were most agreeable to their own ill nature they had form'd themselves into a Sect, all the ill-natur'd People, both in Town and Country, were easily converted to it; and some good People too, perhaps, were so far imposed on by the mighty shew it made of Zeal and Sanctity, as to imbody with it, the candour of their Natures not permitting them to suspect a rotten Core under so fair an out-side; till at length being poysoned themselves, by the ill Principles of the Party, they became as ill-natured as the rest of their Brethren; and so as ill Nature begot the ill Principles in some, so the ill Principles begot ill Nature in others: So that though this Pharisaical Religion made a mighty Shew; and look't with a most demure and sanctified Countenance; yet 'tis plain that the only Foundation of it was baseness and ill Nature; and since thus it hath been, thus it may be again: For in all dissenting Religions, such as the Pharisees was, there is something very grateful to proud and untractable Natures: 'tis a mighty gratification to our Pride to Dissent and be Singular in our Opinion and Practises, because it looks as if we were wiser than the rest of the World; it wonderfully tickles a cross-grain'd surly Nature to be opposite in Opinion to that which is uppermost: And therefore, before you side with any Party that

that advances a Pretence of Religion against the Government, it concerns you strictly to observe whether in their ordinary Conversation they are Modest and Gentle, Humble and easily to be Intreated; and if so, you may justly conclude that their Religion, whether it be True or False, is founded in their Reason and Conscience. But if on the contrary, you perceive in them a Fierce, Proud, Froward, and Inflexible Nature; if in their ordinary Converses they are Cross and Unsociable; if they affect Contention in the Neighbourhoods and Societies wherein they are engaged, and are hot and impatient of Contradiction: you may without breach of Charity conclude, that their Dissent proceeds not so much from the Convictions of their Reason, as from the Pride and Crossness of their Humour. And therefore, wherever you find such as these contending with the Government; as you would not be made the Tools of their Perverseness, stand off, and have nothing to do with them. For when Men have the Seeds of Sedition in their Natures, they are thereby inclined to entertain Dissents from the established Religion, meerly because those Dissents are opposite to the Government; and though, if the Principles of their Dissent are ill, they will the more inflame their ill Nature against the Government; yet their ill Nature which tempted them to espouse those Principles, would have rendered them untractable to the Govern-



ment, whether they had espoused them or no. And thus, with all Plainness and Integrity, I have indeavoured to Characterize those that are given to Change, that so honest Men may know them when they see them, and avoid them: And if herein I have Reflected upon any ill Men, or ill Party of Men; it was with no other Design, but to warn others from Intermingling with them; and surely, to Admonish Men of a Danger that threatens Ruine both to their Souls and Bodies, and shew them the Way to Peace, Security, and Happiness, is such a friendly Office as can give Offence to none but such as are resolved never to be Honester or Wiser. I confess, of all the Offices that belong to a Preacher, I am naturally the most averse to that of Reprehension, I do not love to expose Mens Faults, to probe and rake into their Sores; and 'tis not only my Charity to Mankind, but the Inclination of my Nature to find Fault, that makes me wish that all Men were so good as to need no Reprehension, that so we might have nothing to do, but to praise and encourage them, to excite them to go on with the Comforts of Religion, and the just Applauses of well doing. But alas, we live in an Age would make a Stone speak, and force any honest Man in despite of all the Candor and Modesty of his Nature, to Cry aloud against the fulsom Hypocrisies and Impostures that look through our most glorious Pretences to Religion: For what a  
nauseous



nauseous Shame is it, to see Men set up for Reformers, and disturb a wise and excellent Establishment with endless Scruples about indifferent Things, whose Consciences, as they call 'em, are as tender as their Eyes on one side, and yet as hard as their Foreheads on the other; cannot indure the weight of an innocent Ceremony when their Obedience is required; and yet to serve the Interest of a Faction, can dance under loads of Perjury and Treason? and yet, God help us, such as these have been the Captains of all our Factions against the Government; Men of ill Lives and Atheistical Principles; that pretend to Grace without Morality, and to Religion without believing in God, and yet make a mighty Noise against the Government for true Religion, pure Ordinances, and a thorough Reformation, and therewithal have drawn in our discontented Sects into their Party, and listed them Voluntiers to their Revenge and Ambition: And indeed, while Men live in Dissent from the established Religion, it is impossible but their Minds should be in some measure prejudiced against the Government, especially if they are restrained from propagating their Dissents, as they must expect to be under all wise Governments; for to be sure, this Restriction will be accounted by them an injurious Persecution, and 'twill be hard for them to refrain hating their Governours, whilst they look upon them as their Persecutors; and when once their

Passions

Passions are armed against the Government, they are half way onwards to an open Rebellion: And 'twill be an easy matter for any Cashier'd Grandee, or Politick Demagogue that has but Wit enough to Chase their Discontents, and Credit enough to head their Cause, to form them into a resolute Faction against the Government; so that it will be impossible, either for the Government to be safe, or for us to be secure from the Mischiefs of Faction, whilst we affect to dissent from the established Religion. And therefore it concerns every Dissenter, as he values his own Safety and Innocence, to use all honest ways to satisfy his Conscience in the Communion of the established Church, where he will not only be secured from those Disaffections to the Government, which he is lyable to, whilst he continues in any discountenanced Sect; but also instituted in such firm Principles of Loyalty, as if he follows, will for ever secure him from ingaging in Factions: For this is the Doctrine of our Church expressed in the Homily of Obedience, *We may not in any wise withstand violently, or rebel against the Rulers, or make any Insurrection, Sedition, or Tumult, either by force of Arms, or otherwise, against the Anointed of the Lord, or any of his Officers; but we must in such case (that is, when we are commanded unlawful things) patiently suffer all Wrongs and Injuries, referring the Judgment of our Case to God:*

And

And in this, as well as in her other Doctrines, her Government and Discipline, our Church doth exactly copy after the Primitive Christianity : If therefore we believe this Doctrine, our Consciences will never consent to our lifting our selves against the Government ; but if instead of Believing it, we openly Contradict and Oppose it, as all those do, who pretend Religion for their Faction, we are so far Dissenters from the Church of *England* ; for Conformity to a Church consists not merely in frequenting its Prayers, and Sermons, and Sacraments, and complying with its Rites and Discipline, but also in believing its Doctrines, or at least, not openly Opposing and Contradicting them : But whosoever sides with a Faction against the Government, upon pretence of Religion, doth thereby openly renounce the Doctrine of our Church, and becomes a profest Non-conformist, how Conformable soever he may be in other particulars. So that tho there are too many Men, who to credit their ill Designs against the Government, shelter themselves under the Wings of the Church ; yet it's evident they are either Non-conformists to the Church, or Conformists that act against their own Principles, which is such a Fault as no Church can prevent, so long as there is such a thing as Free-Will in the World : Wherefore, as you would preserve your selves from those manifold Mischiefs that Faction draws after it, do not found your Loyalty upon  
Humour

Humour, or Fashion, or Interest, which are fickle and variable things; but upon the Religious Principles of the Church, whereof you are Members, which will keep us stedfast, and immovable amidst all the Mutabilities of the World: For whilst you have no Principles to lead you, and you reserve your selves to follow Fortune, and the Turns of outward Affairs; you will be shifting your selves upon every Change, and in a very unscriptural Sense, *putting off the Old-man, and putting on the New*. And whilst you thus transform your selves into a Thousand several Shapes, as you run through the still Changing Fashions of the World, besides that it will expose ye of all sides to the Odious Character of Turn-Coats and Runagadoes that are constant to nothing, and to the Bosom Satyrs and secret up-braidings of your own Consciences: Besides this, I say, it will Eternally perplex and intangle your Lives. For upon every new Alteration of Affairs, you must act a new part, and put on a new Garb of Conversation: And whilst you thus shift sides upon every turn, new shape your Humours, and jump from one extreme to another; you will be always doing violence to your Natures, because you will act no part long enough, to render any natural and easie to ye; so that when all is done, the easiest way of Living, is to Live honestly, that is, to set down honest Principles in our Minds, and then

then resolve to follow them through all Events; so shall we live Consistently with our selves, and whatsoever happens from without, be always the same, and in all Conditions still know where to find our selves; because we shall always act upon the same Principles, and so there will be no Cross Deliberations in our Minds, no Mazes or Intrigues in our Lives, no By-ways of Actions upon new Emergencies; but whatsoever happens we shall still be going on through the same Path towards the same end, and whatsoever befalls us from without, whether it Rains or Shines, Prove Calm, or Tempestuous, we shall never be at a loss how to behave our selves, but our Principles will still Chalk us out the way we are to walk in; and though in following them we may sometimes indanger our worldly Interest, and fall under the disgrace of a Rable and the Persecutions of a prevailing Faction: Yet our very Enemies will be forc'd to revere and honour us, to acknowledge that we are Constant and brave honest, and resign'd to our own Principles; and which is better than that, we shall revere our selves, and be supported under our Sufferings with the Applauses of our Conscience, and the Hopes of a Glorious Immortality; which will render our Condition not only Tolerable in it self, but much more desirable than the Crowns and Triumphs of prosperous Hypocrites; and which is best of all, God himself

will Honour us before Angels and Saints, and plead our Cause, and Vindicate our Innocence, and reward our Sufferings for Righteousness sake; thus, by pursuing the honest Principles of our Religion, we shall be inviolably secur'd against all the mischiefs of Faction, and immovably confirmed in our Loyalty, both to God and the King, which in all Probability will render our Lives secure and easie in this World, but to be sure Everlastingly happy in the World to come.

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